

ADC “Dogfather” Ralph E. Pendergast

Mr. Ralph Pendergast is the Arizona Department of Corrections’ Service Dog Program Administrator, and our Department’s leading Subject Matter Expert on the use of narcotics detection, security patrol, and trailing hound canines in the correctional setting.

Starting with us in September 1995, Ralph has been involved in running service dog teams, advising service dog teams, training service dog teams, and even helping to host an entire conference of service dog teams—in this case, the 2005 National Police Canine Association’s Annual Training Seminar and Competition, which was held last fall in Tucson.

In fact, he was instrumental in getting ADC involved with the National Police Canine Association (NPCA), and we now have a total of 70 NPCA-certified service dog teams, including both trailing hounds and dual-purpose dogs, located throughout the state at all ten of our prison complexes. Serving double-duty as the Southwest Regional Director of the NPCA, his 24+ years of service dog experience and law enforcement expertise make him nationally recognized by his peers.

As Service Dog Program Administrator, Ralph keeps his finger on the pulse of all canine activities within the Department, reporting on program effectiveness, ensuring or overseeing training and maintenance, conducting national certification testing, and reviewing the performance of every service dog team at every complex.